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YOUR OPINIONS

Anti-science law threatens tech jobs of future

Re: "Religious instruction doesn't fit in science class," *Your Opinions*, April 30.

The 21st-century economy will require a new generation of scientists and engineers, and signs point to trouble ahead for New Orleans and Louisiana. Employers already are struggling to fill science and tech jobs, and recent test scores show that 53 percent of the state's eighth-graders — the workforce of tomorrow — lack basic competence in science.

It is therefore alarming that the Louisiana Senate has passed a bill that directly threatens science education.

Proponents offer deceptive arguments about encouraging students to think critically. But Louisiana's education standards already do that.

The real intent is to introduce

classroom materials that raise misleading objections to the well-documented science of evolution and offer a religious idea called intelligent design as a supposed alternative. That would unleash an assault against scientific integrity, leaving students confused about science and unprepared to excel in a modern workforce.

The intelligent design campaign has spent millions to invent a so-called scientific debate about evolution that does not exist in the scientific community. In fact, every major science and medical society in the world embraces evolution as the explanation for how life has developed on Earth.

Of course we all have a right to interpret the origins of life based on our faith. But there's

no need to pit religion against science. The Catholic Church and thousands of U.S. religious leaders from many denominations say evolution and faith are compatible.

Can intelligent design be discussed in schools? Perhaps in humanities class. But courts repeatedly have ruled that creationism and intelligent design are religious arguments that can't be taught in science class.

Rather than provoke an expensive, divisive legal fight, we'd be better off doing everything we can to ensure the best possible science education for the next generation of problem-solvers.

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